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## Career planning: Alternative routes

MANY students prefer to skip the STPM. They can quote you all the reasons why they don't want to take the STPM. We have heard these many times over the last few decades.

### Why Students avoid the STPM

As students finish Form 5 they are bubbling teenagers wanting to leave home and be with their peers. They want to stand alone, live alone and be FREE. Some prefer to be as far as possible from their parents. No amount of advice can convince them. In addition they claim that:

(a) STPM takes two years to complete. It does not prepare you for employment. It is more academic work such as Physics, Chemistry, Maths, etc.. Why waste two years?

(b) STPM is in Bahasa Malaysia. It may not be recognised in foreign countries such as Australia, UK, USA, etc.

(c) STPM is a very tough examination to pass. There are easier Pre-Us such as Canadian Grade 13, South Australian Matriculation Exam, Foundation Programs, Pre-Business, Pre-Law, etc. Why struggle with STPM?

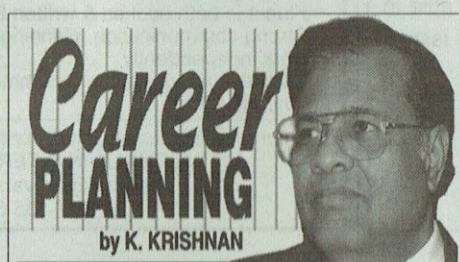
(d) Even if you pass the STPM with flying colours, you cannot get the courses that you want in the Public Universities. When you apply for Accountancy, they offer you International business. When you apply for Medicine, they offer you Bio-medic. So why take the STPM?

(e) Even if you pass the STPM, you can't get the university you want. You apply for UMS and you get UUM. When you apply to USM you get UPM. What is the point?

The reasons for not taking the STPM can go on and on. May be some of the reasons are valid. However, once they decide STPM as "sour grapes", no amount of convincing can change their minds.

### Are there any other alternatives?

Yes, there are. If you are not confident of passing the STPM, you can opt for the Diploma Programs that are offered by colleges and universities. For instance, you can apply to local Polytechnics, Community Colleges or



Public Training Centres for Diploma courses. You can apply for even competitive courses such as Accountancy, Business, Engineering, etc. After completing your Diploma, you have the opportunity to apply to Public Universities to continue your degree program.

Most Diploma programs are business, technical, engineering

related or vocational programs. Once you do a Diploma program in a particular field, you can only do a degree in that field. It is difficult to change to other courses. For instance, if you do a diploma in Nursing, you can only do a degree in Nursing. You will not be able to switch from Nursing to Medicine, Dentistry or Pharmacy.

Students who are planning to do non-professional courses have a good opportunity to do Diploma programs. Most Diploma programs train you to enter the employment market directly. Upon completion of your Diploma you can immediately look for jobs. Many people work for a few years to gain the necessary experience in the field they studied. Once they have a passion to work in the field, they can continue their studies. It is also not necessary to quit your job to study. There are more options to work and study these days.

Many universities have part-time programs for working adults. The entry level is also very flexible because you are considered as a matured student. Again there are courses offered through distance learning such as the Open University and the Wawasan Open University. Many Public universities too offer distance learning programs. As long as a student wants to study, there are enough opportunities for one to study in Malaysia today.

### Career Tips

Students can check on the websites of Polytechnics, Community Colleges and other training organisations to seek information on Diploma programs. The websites are quite comprehensive. You can even apply on-line.

### Questions & Answers

If you have a question on careers, please write to : [krishnan@ark.com.my](mailto:krishnan@ark.com.my).